

University of Rhode Island
DigitalCommons@URI

Library Services and Construction Act:
Reauthorization Technicals (1984-1985)

Education: National Endowment for the Arts and
Humanities, Subject Files I (1973-1996)

1984

Library Services and Construction Act: Reauthorization Technicals (1984-1985): Speech 01

Claiborne Pell

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell_neh_I_52

Recommended Citation

Pell, Claiborne, "Library Services and Construction Act: Reauthorization Technicals (1984-1985): Speech 01" (1984). *Library Services and Construction Act: Reauthorization Technicals (1984-1985)*. Paper 23.
http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell_neh_I_52/23

This Speech is brought to you for free and open access by the Education: National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities, Subject Files I (1973-1996) at DigitalCommons@URI. It has been accepted for inclusion in Library Services and Construction Act: Reauthorization Technicals (1984-1985) by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@URI. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@etal.uri.edu.

STATEMENT BY SENATOR CLAIBORNE PELL ON INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION
TO REAUTHORIZE THE LIBRARY SERVICES AND CONSTRUCTION ACT, MARCH 29, 1984

I want to take this occasion to express my very strong support for the legislation which is being introduced today to reauthorize the Library Services and Construction Act. The measure will extend the important grant programs that serve our nation's public libraries for another 5 years through fiscal year 1989.

The Library Services and Construction Act, which I have been proud to support throughout four Senate terms, is without doubt the single most important source of federal assistance for our public libraries. It has successfully provided this support to the states through a system of formula grants and, though this adds up to only a small percentage of all library aid, monies have been targeted toward particularly critical areas. These areas have traditionally included under-served groups such as the handicapped, the disadvantaged and those people who speak English as a second language. Federal funds for strengthening these services are authorized through Title I of the LSCA and a sum of \$75 million is being recommended. It is important that we continue this federal responsibility because local jurisdictions alone cannot finance programs which will ensure access to library services for these special population groups.

Libraries in major metropolitan areas have also benefitted from LSCA funds. These urban libraries have been particularly hard hit by inflation resulting in reduced open hours and severe restrictions on the ability to purchase new books. Urban library services have also been cut back by municipalities as residents have fled to the suburbs and the local tax base has subsequently eroded.

Title II of the LSCA authorizes grants for the construction and renovation of library buildings. Regrettably, no funds have been appropriated under this Title since 1973, save for a one-time appropriation of \$50 million in 1983 as part of the Emergency Jobs Bill. I am especially hopeful that the funds for Title II that are authorized in this bill will be appropriated this year. The need for financial assistance for public library construction and renovation is acute. The funds appropriated for this purpose in 1983 were a beginning, but only a fraction of the potential projects could be carried out with those funds. It is my understanding that over \$400 million is the investment needed today to alleviate overcrowding and bring existing library facilities up to date. I am prepared to support a renewed effort in this area, and am delighted that \$50 million is authorized in this legislation specifically for library construction projects for each year that this legislation covers.

Funds for Interlibrary Cooperation, under Title III, have become especially critical as libraries convert their record systems over to computer-based technology. These funds allow libraries to share information throughout their nationwide network. Libraries are our most important resource for the dispersal of public information, and it is Title III that helps ensure the most efficient distribution of this information to the broadest population. Eighteen million dollars is being authorized for Title III in FY85 - a sum that will help bring interlibrary cooperation fully into the computer age.

This bill will renew our government's commitment to a healthy, vital and accessible public library system across the country. Libraries have been described as our most important educational resource in the Nation - second only to the classroom. For this reason alone, this bill deserves our support. I am delighted to join with my colleague from Vermont, Senator Stafford, in cosponsoring this legislation.